

REMARKS

Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 1-18 are pending.

The drawings were objected to as not showing the first, second and third destination codes mentioned in the claims. It is clear from Figure 2 and the accompanying description that these codes are method-derived data. One skilled in the art can readily understand the scope of the claims without having this data shown in a drawing. However, to reduce the issues, Fig. 2 has been amended to add this data and the specification has been amended to refer to it.

In response to the rejection of claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. 112, this claim has been amended to refer to the ID tag process described in the specification. There should be no further issue of specification support.

Claims 1-2, 5, 13 have been rejected as anticipated by Avant et al ("Avant") U.S. Patent No. 6,977,353. The limitations of claims 2 and 6 have been incorporated into claim 1 to reduce the issues and without prejudice to applicants pursuing the original broad claims in a continuing application. Claim 6 was rejected on the basis of Avant in view of Haruki U.S. Patent No. 4,632,252. The benefit of the method of the invention is obtained primarily in a postal sorting environment, and the processes for determining destination codes are carried out in a manner effective to reduce the overall rejection rate of the sort. Avant is concerned with implementation of a mail piece Identification Code Sorting (ICS) system wherein the process looks for a code on both the front and back of the mail piece as its initial steps. The examiner cites Haruki for a teaching of conveying a series of mail pieces on a conveyor while attempting to determine a destination, and this general type of sorting process is without doubt known in the art. However, claim 1 is directed to a method that can improve read rates during sorting, and to accomplish that requires more than either of the references suggest, namely that the steps be carried out as specified during sorting. Both Haruki and Avant teach elaborate control systems to achieve other purposes. Accordingly, claim 1 as now amended is not rendered obvious by features suggested in either or both of Avant and Haruki.

It is most desirable, as set forth in pending claim 7, that the decision is made using the steps provided before each mail piece reaches the first diverter gate. If the process takes longer than that,

the mail piece will have to be sorted as a reject. Most sorting machines have such gates, but the examiner in rejecting this claim does not point to any disclosure in Haruki that requires applicant's steps (a) to (e) be carried out within such a time limit. No basis is given for the rejection at the bottom of page 8 of the examiners action.

As to claim 10 the examiner cites Avant col. 8 lines 40-41, which read: "ICU 508 receives delivery address data from a Central Database 510 and forwards the data along with the mailpiece image, including ID Tag 204, to a Remote Computer Reader (RCR) 512." There is no teaching of concurrent processing, just of forwarding.

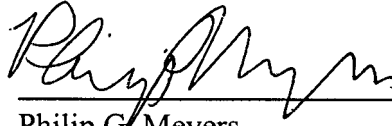
As to claim 12, ID tagging of postal mail for later re-processing is known, but the method of this claim deals with ID tagged mail at the same time as the bar code and address code. This is not suggested by Fisher et al. which relates to tracking artistic works that are accessed on the internet or from a data center to be downloaded pursuant to an agreement with a representative of the copyright owner. The reference appears to be completely irrelevant to the present invention.

As to claims 14-18, the examiner cites Avant and Stevens et al. 5,558,232. Especially as to apparatus claims 15-18, Stevens describes a mail sorting machine of one type, but neither reference discloses a computerized control system capable of operating the sorting machine in the manner claimed. The arguments presented above concerning claim 1 are applicable. The reason given for rejection of claims 14, 15 is not understood. Claim 14 does not require imaging opposite sides of a mail piece, to the contrary the destination bar code and address data are generally on the same side of the mail piece, but more rapid parallel processing could be had by imaging the same surface twice rather than trying to process the image data for both OCR and bar code recognition. For the foregoing reasons, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103 should be withdrawn.

Applicant has made an earnest attempt to place the case in condition for allowance. Favorable action and passage of the case to issue are respectfully requested. It is believed that no

other fees are due. If this is incorrect, please charge any required fees to Deposit Account No. 50-1588.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip G. Meyers", written over a horizontal line.

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